

Obama's War on Freedom

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Perhaps no president in US history disappointed supporters more than Obama. He pledged "change you can believe it." He promised hope.

He did Lincoln one better. He fooled most people enough times to matter. He never cared about rule of law principles. He trashed them in office. He deplores democratic values.

He's beholden to monied interests. "Yes we can" conceals his dark side duplicity. He made America look increasingly like Guatemala. Nothing ahead suggests change.

International, constitutional and US statute laws don't matter. Bush declared them null and void. So did Obama.

He presides over a ruthless police state apparatus. No one is free and safe. Big Brother watches everyone. Mass surveillance is official US policy.

On Friday, Obama will announce so-called new guidelines. He'll ask Congress for help. Expect business as usual to continue. Expect worse than ever ahead. Expect lies claiming otherwise.

Ending the fake war on terror matters. So does halting mass surveillance entirely. Restoring rule of law freedoms matters most.

Expect Obama's war to destroy them to continue. When Bush signed the Patriot Act into law, Center for Constitutional Rights senior litigation attorney Nancy Chang asked: "What's so patriotic about trampling on the Bill of Rights?"

In March 2006, Congress renewed most Patriot Act powers. In May 2011, Congress and Obama extended key ones for another four years.

They include mass surveillance. Domestic spying increased markedly under Obama. Anything goes more than ever became policy. It remains so.

Expect the worst of what's ongoing to continue. Expect another Obama pledge to be broken.

Expect the worst of mass surveillance to remain official US policy. Expect fake national security threats given as reasons.

Expect hyped fear to continue. Expect freedom to keep eroding en route to disappearing altogether.

Spying in America is institutionalized. Big Brother is no longer fiction. State-of-the-art technology permits the worst of what's ongoing.

Decades earlier spying was crude compared to today's. Modern capability is unprecedented. Virtually everyone can be monitored everywhere at all times.

Nothing too secret or personal can escape scrutiny. NSA technology permits monitoring offline computers. It's done through radio waves.

At least 100,000 computers worldwide include software enabling it. Perhaps they all will eventually.

NSA can penetrate computers covertly. It can alter data without Internet access. It can create a digital highway for cyberattacks.

Its program is code-named "Quantum." According to cybersecurity expert James Andrew Lewis:

"What's new here is the scale and sophistication of (NSA's) ability to get into computers and networks to which no one had ever had access before."

"Some of these capabilities have been around for a while, but the combination of learning how to penetrate systems to insert software and learning how to do that using radio frequencies has given the US a window it's never had before."

Expect NSA to take full advantage. Perhaps everyone connected online will be monitored this way eventually.

Perhaps targeted individuals will be attacked this way. Expect greater than ever harm committed.

Expect Obama and Congress to do nothing to stop it. Manufactured threats permit the worst of what's ongoing. Domestic spying more than ever is institutionalized.

In August 2007, [candidate Obama](#) addressed the Woodrow Wilson Center. He lied like he always does. He does it shamelessly. It's part of his DNA.

He addressed many issues. He lied about every one. He promised real change if elected president. He exceeds the worst of George Bush.

We lost our "basic values," he said. We got "color-coded politics of fear" instead.

He argued against waging one war after another. He promised to close Guantanamo straightaway in office.

It's "time to turn a page," he said. We'll "restore our values." We'll "secure a more resilient homeland."

We'll end wars that shouldn't be waged, he said. "The solution in Afghanistan is not just military. (It's) political and economic."

"(T)he days of compromising our values are over."

Obama promised to "adhere to the Geneva Conventions." He trashed them straightaway in office. He systematically violates rule of law principles. Nothing impedes his ruthlessness.

No promise is too sacred not to break. He pledged “no more illegal wiretapping of American citizens.”

“No more national security letters (NSLs) to spy on citizens who are not suspected of a crime.”

Most people never heard of them. Many are victims without knowing it. Others are gagged from discussing them.

They involve abusive police state intrusions. Patriot Act authority gives FBI operatives access to whatever personal information they want.

No court approval is needed. Most targeted individuals committed no crimes. They planned none. It doesn't matter.

NSL use is unconstitutional. Obama continues the worst of Bush administration abuses. Another promise made. Another broken.

“No more tracking citizens who do nothing more than protest a misguided war,” he said. “No more ignoring the law when it is inconvenient.”

“That is not who we are...We will again set an example for the world that the law is not subject to the whims of stubborn rulers, and that justice is not arbitrary.”

Obama pledged to end violating civil liberties. He called doing so unacceptable. He exceeded the worst of Bush administration policies.

He lies claiming otherwise. He trashed rule of law principles. He mocks democratic values.

He declared cyberwar on ordinary Americans. He supports draconian cybersecurity legislation.

Cyber-preemption increases police state power. Homeland repression is worse than ever.

Administration policies are the most secretive in US history. They're the most lawless and out-of-control.

On January 15, the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) (EFF) asked: “Will Obama Hit the Mark on Real NSA Reform?”

He'll announce so-called changes. He'll claim he supports reform. “What can we expect,” asked EFF?

“Many people are (justifiably) skeptical...Instead of actually stopping the spying, Obama could just make a pronouncement calling for more transparency or additional layers of bureaucratic oversight.”

“(H)e could duck the most important thing (needed) to show leadership: rein in government surveillance.”

EFF offered “common-sense fixes.” They address key issues. Don't expect Obama to change anything meaningful. Expect worse than ever practices ahead. EFF reforms include:

- (1) "Stop mass surveillance of digital communications and communication records." Stop using legislative or Executive Order cover to justify the unjustifiable.
- (2) "Protect the privacy rights of foreigners." Calling them fair game doesn't wash.
- (3) "Don't turn communications companies into the new Big Brother: no data retention mandate." End NSA's telecommunications collection program.
- (4) Require judicial authorization for National Security Letters. End gag order authority. Rein in lawless FBI practices. Restore rule of law principles.
- (5) "Stop undermining Internet security, weakening encryption, and infiltrating companies." Abolish these practices once and for all.
- (6) "Oppose the FISA Improvements Act (FIA)." Senator Dianne Feinstein (D. CA) sponsored it. She chairs the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

On October 31, FIA was introduced. Senate Intelligence Committee members approved it. They voted 11 to 4 in favor. Legislation awaits a full floor vote.

It's a fake fix. Enactment would enhance NSA spying. It'll codify it into law.

- (7) "Reject the third party doctrine." Obama should say data held by third parties (like phone and Internet companies) have "the same constitutional protections as data stored at home."
- (8) "Provide a full public accounting of our surveillance apparatus." End administration secrecy. Tell Americans and others what they deserve to know.
- (9) "Reform the state secrets privilege and stop over-classifying." Sunlight more than ever is needed. Public accountability is most of all. End rule of law abuses.
- (10) "Reform the FISA court: provide a public advocate and stop secret law." FISA court judges are secretive, unaccountable and rubber-stamp. Abolishing their authority entirely should be ordered.
- (11) "Protect national security whistleblowers working for the public good." Candidate Obama called whistleblowing "acts of courage and patriotism."

He pledged whistleblower protection, saying:

"Often the best source of information about waste, fraud, and abuse in government is an existing employee committed to public integrity and willing to speak out."

"We need to empower federal employees as watchdogs of wrongdoing and partners in performance."

He promised to do it. He promised protection. He's targeted more whistleblowers than all his predecessors combined. It bears repeating. Another promise made. Another broken.

- (12) "Criminal defendants should know if national security surveillance is being used against them." Failing to do so violates Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights.

They guarantee defendants “meaningful opportunity” to effectively challenge government accusations.

EFF will score Obama’s Friday speech. It’ll publish its assessment online. It bears repeating. Policy pronouncements don’t matter. They ring hollow.

Enforcing rule of law principles alone counts. Obama betrayed the public trust. He’s done so consistently.

Expect no change going forward. Expect worse ahead than ever. Expect continuing police state lawlessness. Expect full-blown tyranny if not stopped.

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